As a rule, we are safest where we are few—where we receive individual treatment, fit ourselves into the national framework, and can rise without arousing attention or jealousy. In such circumstances we most quickly dissolve and disappear, and reach that supreme security which for the Jews in the Diaspora lies in non-existence. This was the path of certain old European Jewries, and would, within measurable time, have been that of German Jewry, if they had had to deal with a normal people. Still, for the main body of the Jewish people the nineteenth century (which extends till 1914) was not an age of numerical decline, but of the greatest expansion.

At the destruction of the Jewish State, in 70 A.D., our numbers, according to an estimate quoted by Dr. Ruppin, were 4^ millions, of whom, even then, only one million inhabited Palestine; the greatest part were scattered from Baghdad to Alexandria. This was the Oriental period of Jewish history.

In the eleventh century the spiritual and political centre of world-Jewry began to shift to Spain and by 1492 the Sephardic Jews formed, even numerically, the most important body in Jewry. With the persecutions and expulsions which set in about that time, closes the Spanish, or Iberian, period of our history.

During the next three centuries, our numbers remained low, and when by 1800 world-Jewry reached

the figure of about 2J millions, nearly half of it inhabited the territories of the late Kingdom of Poland. This shifting of the centre was probably due at^ least as much to differences in the rate of natural increase as to migrations—before the end of the eighteenth century, towns were the graveyards of population, and in Poland alone did the Jews live largely in rural, or semi-rural, surroundings. The nineteenth century is in our history the period of the numerical preponderance of the Yiddish-speaking Jew of Eastern Europe, and of the intellectual and economic predominance of the German Jew,